



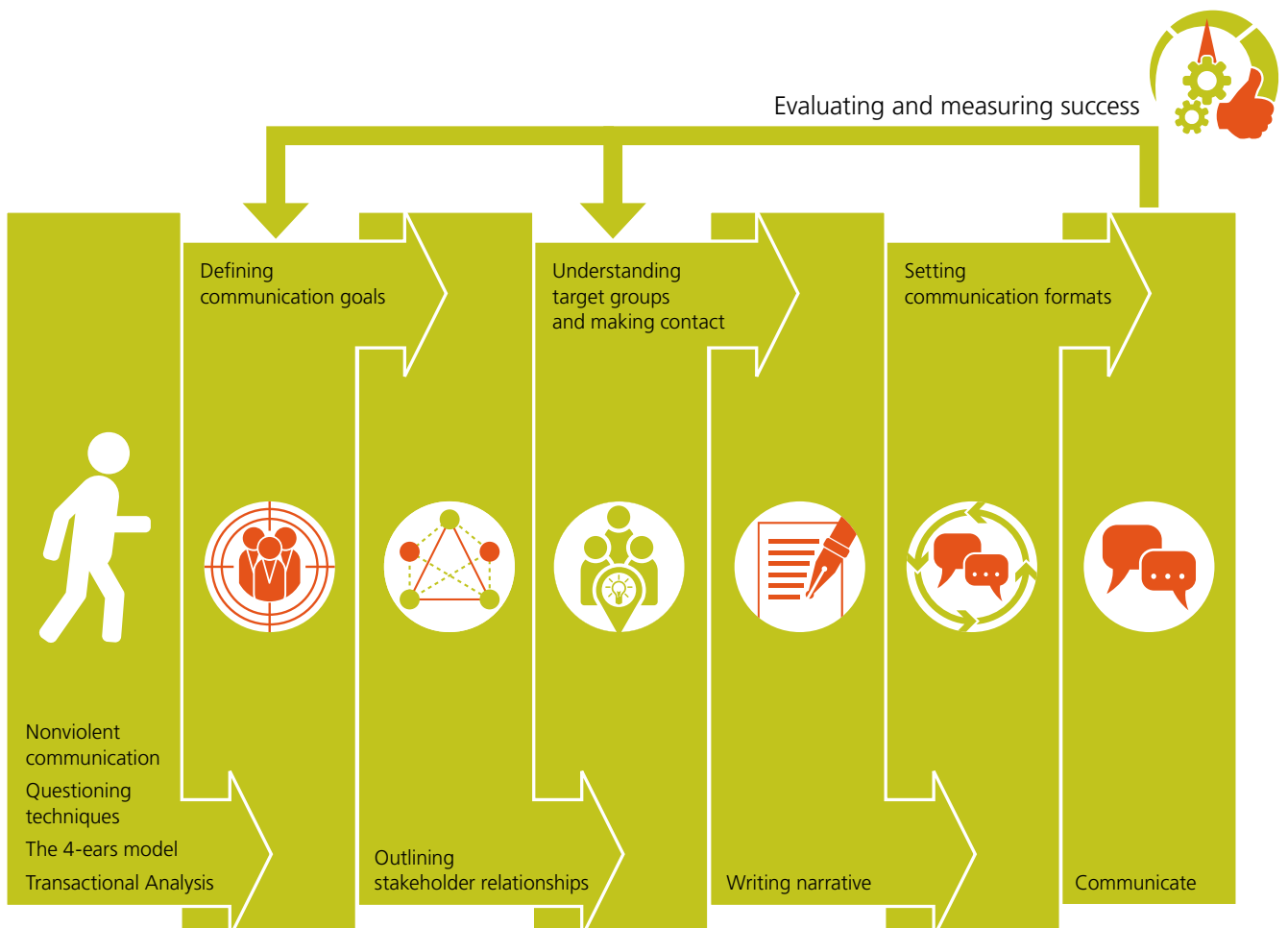
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MANUAL FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION IN NATURE CONSERVATION

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 NATURE CONSERVATION AND COMMUNICATION

Nature conservation is perceived as positive by most people, and yet, the implementation of nature conservation goals sometimes leads to conflicts. Too often, the players involved interfere with each other, often have different economically or socially oriented goals, which can create resistance among those involved and affected. For example, the concerns of a nature conservation project may be to preserve natural habitats and increase biodiversity. On the other hand, there may be user interests in creating living space on the land (a social goal), intensive agricultural use and/or making other resources available (an economic goal).

Resistance and acceptance can occur in different intensities, and willingness to act can change dynamically based on the perceptions of individuals and groups. Perceptions of any situation are as individual as the people perceiving it, and can be very selective: they are largely determined by cultural and emotional factors, e.g., traditional values and emotional obligations, image, group membership, role models, etc.

Resistance and acceptance both exist in different forms and can be active or passive. The strongest form of resistance is often an active, action-oriented opposition¹: In a weakened state, rejection can also manifest itself in verbal and non-verbal expressions. Dissension, indifference, and tolerance occur when there is little or no subjective involvement, and therefore, usually no action is taken. Acceptance, on the other hand, can be conditional, i.e., it can be linked to conditions and considerations, and thus be at a low level, or change if the conditions change¹. High acceptance, i.e., active agreement and good will, arises from inner conviction, which then attributes a positive evaluation to the measure or goal. If a conviction develops further, in a positive way, it can be expressed through active actions, or the commitment to the conversion of a goal or measure.

The success of a nature conservation project depends largely on the acceptance and support of many people. Initial resistance can turn into acceptance, and support by many people. This requires transparent and appreciative communication, which addresses cultural and emotional aspects, and is not based solely on the transmission of specialist information.

A transparent and appreciative communication is essentially based on 3 factors²:

- The perception and processing structure of the communication content with the target groups (see Appendix: 4-Ear-Model, Transactional Analysis). It is important to know the needs (cultural, social/emotional aspects, and user interests) of the target groups, and to actively respond to these needs.
- The style of communication must be an honest mix of information and addressing the needs of the target groups. Non-violent communication, transparency, openness, and appreciation are fundamental aspects of an attitude that are essential to achieving positive results.
- The communicator must have specialist knowledge of the nature conservation project, and at the same time, possess skills in communication, cooperation and building consensus, in order to successfully convey their credibility and competence, and thus their message, to the outside world. In many projects, it is advisable to involve professional PR/marketing experts in the process, e.g., in the development of a communication strategy.

In nature conservation work, the realization has been growing for only a few years that communication does not represent the exclusive transmission of specialized information, but that the socio-economic factors of all participants must be taken into account. This guide aims to support and accelerate this process as a guide and source of inspiration for successful communication in nature conservation projects.

1.2 THE LIFE PROGRAM OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union has been supporting international environmental and nature conservation, as well as climate policy, with large sums of money for decades. Since 1992, the EU funding program LIFE has financed over 4000 projects throughout Europe and has set a total budget of over 3.4 billion euros for the 2014–2020 funding period alone. In the coming 2021–2027 funding period, this budget is to be increased by a further 2 billion. 1 billion of these funds is explicitly earmarked for LIFE nature conservation projects, of which 55% of the total funding volume has always been reserved for the LIFE regulation since 2014, which includes mainly classical nature conservation measures. In contrast, the amount available for the so-called LIFE Governance & Information Projects (GIE, which also includes projects in the field of nature conservation, with primary objectives such as education, information campaigns, communication, and conflict management among interest groups) is negligible. In each call year, LIFE had about €500 million available for more than 200 projects between 2014 and 2020, of which only about 15 were GIE projects. Since 2018, the available budget for GIE projects has been capped (approx. €10M per year) and the number of these projects dropped to less than 10, including 1 or 2 real nature conservation campaign projects, with the goal of preventing conflicts of interest, education or achieving acceptance.

LIFE nature conservation projects contain communication measures, which have been demanded more often for some years by the project evaluators. However, both the requirements for these measures and the instructions for applicants are far from modern communication goals or art: for example, a donor demands measures for “dissemination and visibility” of the projects, and provides examples such as information boards, brochures, websites, and seminars. Higher involvement of stakeholders is desirable. In contrast to the other parts of the LIFE program, there is no mandatory evaluation of the impact of the project measures on the local economy, various interest groups, or local residents. The LIFE Nature Conservation Program therefore offers less ambitious communication guidelines and is relatively conservative. Modernization would be advisable in any case, as many projects are making progress in this respect.

The evaluation of communication practice in LIFE projects by Latvian LIFE project manager Inga Račinska is exemplary; she has been developing, implementing, and evaluating LIFE projects for almost 20 years. According to Račinska, 95% of the LIFE nature protection projects she is aware of report mainly on nature protection measures, methods of respective work, and their importance. By the demonstration of measures, it is believed that these would then spread further, as the LIFE program anticipates in its guidance. According to Račinska, this is a misjudgment, because real incentives and understanding about the necessity of these measures are missing. Only in recent years, did the shift slowly begin to more “communication” instead of “dissemination”. However, the projects are still too weak in their focus on specific target groups (see factors above), so that the “general public” is given rather unspecifically as a target group, which is also confirmed by our survey.

A large number of LIFE projects in many EU countries focus on measures in agricultural areas. Here, communication with landowners is particularly important and difficult because it is a matter of changing existing land use measures, demanding restrictions or uneconomical measures, as well as changing ownership structures. Land purchases are an important part of LIFE Nature Conservation projects – a very large part of the budget of LIFE nature protection projects is used for this purpose. There are detailed instructions for action, and a separate designation of project measures for land purchases, which are strongly supported by the program. Land is purchased by public authorities and nature conservation foundations in a targeted manner, in order to set up nature reserves, or to optimize the existing boundaries of protected areas based on the ecosystems, to prevent undesired human use, or encourage implementation of desired measures by owners on their land through contract farming.

Looking at land purchases from the communication perspective, the question arises whether land purchases may circumvent, or even prevent, the communication of conservation measures. After all, buying land can bypass the need for communication, since the change in ownership means that the new owners assume that they can shape the use of “their” land themselves.

1.3 LIFE MEADOWBIRDS: AN EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

The LIFE Meadowbirds project started in 2011, with a project duration of 10 years, and a budget of €22.3 million. Even before the start of the project, this sum was already being circulated in the press with the title: “€22.3 million for meadowbird protection – the largest project in Lower Saxony”. At the kick-off meeting, project manager Heinrich Belting (from Lower Saxony’s State Office for Water Management, Coastal Protection and Nature Conservation) presented the project with these words: “The LIFE Meadowbird Project wants everything that farmers do not like: rewetting of the meadows, late mowing, bush clearance and land purchase.” So, from the beginning, the cards were laid on the table. This was followed by a large number of round tables, in which bird protection measures and breeding successes were reported on a local level. In addition, there were endless individual discussions with many landowners, in order to negotiate land purchases and leases. This measure was and is the most protracted and costly part of the project, in part due to the great communication efforts, apart from the cost of the land and the administrative efforts. At the end of the project, an optimized network of protected areas will be established in Lower Saxony, with better habitats and breeding conditions for meadowbirds.

Other project measures, such as the containment of predators (feral domestic cats and hedgehogs) in meadowbird breeding areas are a sensitive issue in the public opinion. In LIFE Meadowbirds, the realization of the measures was not smooth in some places and would certainly have benefited from more or different communication methods. This guide is inspired by these lessons.

2. CONSTRUCTION TOOLS FOR A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Responsible individuals from the LIFE Meadowbirds project and 47 international LIFE projects were interviewed in autumn 2019 about their experiences and challenges in the area of communications (Data and analysis of the survey: www.bef-de.org/publikationen).

Their shared experiences are as varied as the projects, and yet it became clear that there are five building blocks of particular importance for the development of a successful communication strategy: (1) defining communication goals, (2) outlining stakeholder and their relationships, (3) setting framework conditions, (4) understanding target groups and making contact, and (5) writing narrative. Only when these building blocks are clear, can appropriate communication formats be developed and implemented.



No matter how good it is: a communication strategy alone cannot lead to success, if it is not based on openness and appreciation. That is why we recommend that all communicators in the field of nature conservation familiarize themselves with the psychology of communication, e.g., with the “4-ear model” (from Friedrich Schulz von Thun), “transactional analysis” (from Eric Berne), or “nonviolent communication” (from Marshall Rosenberg). In the appendix, you will find selected background information on these terms and methods.



2.1 DEFINING COMMUNICATION GOALS

We want to emphasize that communicating is not the same as informing! In order to choose the right communication format, it is important to clarify the communication goals for the overall project as well as for each measure.

COMMUNICATION GOALS CAN BE, FOR EXAMPLE:

- To inform
- To raise awareness
- To support
- To create/maintain common values
- To increase participation
- To change behaviour

This step is essential, as it provides an indication of the influence that socio-economic factors can have on the success of communication.

In general, the more that acceptance and active action is sought, the more important the role of socio-economic factors becomes. For example, passing on specialized information can be quite sufficient if a target group is only to be informed, but not adequate if they need to be motivated to change their behaviour.

The majority of nature conservation projects aim to create awareness and motivate behavioural change. Nevertheless, their current communication is mostly limited to the dissemination of information about intended or implemented measures, and hardly ever includes communication about socio-economic factors. This does not work!



Instructions:

Get an overview of the measures of the project and assign the corresponding communication goals to these measures (Figure 1). Keep in mind that the more that your communication goals call for supporting action by your target group, the more important cultural, emotional, and financial motivations or obstacles become.



Figure 1: Assignment of communication goals to nature conservation measures; the more that communication goals call for a supportive, active attitude or action among a target group, the more influential the socio-economic motivations or barriers become.



2.2 OUTLINING STAKEHOLDER AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

“Stakeholder Mapping” is a frequently used term, and an important step in the development of communication strategies. It means listing all stakeholder involved in a project (responsible people, affected people, and multipliers) and outlining their relationships with each other.

People influence each other, by belonging to the same groups (identities), finding each other likeable on a personal level, or possibly having already had a conflict in another context. Attitudes and interpersonal relationships have an enormous influence on the success of a process. In many projects, there are influential people who can open or close doors, and it is important to know them and their networks of influence.



A proactive approach to the press and other influential multipliers is recommended. There are countless examples of negative and false reporting, which can be avoided by establishing a trust-based, open contact with the press right at the beginning of a project.



Instructions:

- Get an overview of those responsible, those affected, representatives of the press, and multipliers of your project. Try to understand the relationships and their strength and nature, as well as the frequency of contact between these people. One way to collect the data is to use Table 1. Depending on the size of the network, visual overviews (Figure 2) may be helpful.
- Decide which of the stakeholder you will communicate with. Be clear about the communication goals you want to achieve with each stakeholder and/or group.

LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

Stakeholder	Relations to stakeholder X	Contact frequencies <i>weekly</i> <i>monthly</i> <i>yearly</i>	Strength of relationships <i>weak</i> <i>medium</i> <i>strong</i>	Position towards each other <i>positive</i> <i>neutral</i> <i>negative</i>	Target group <i>yes</i> <i>no</i>	Communication goals <i>inform</i> <i>awareness</i> <i>support</i>
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Responsible person

Stakeholder 1						
Stakeholder 2						
Stakeholder 3						

Person affected

Stakeholder 4						
Stakeholder 5						
Stakeholder 6						

Press/ Multipliers

Stakeholder 7						
Stakeholder 8						
Stakeholder 9						

List the stakeholder and their relationships (frequency of contact, strength of relationships, position towards each other); decide whether the stakeholder(s) should be the target group for communication and, if so, which communication goals should be achieved.



OUTLINING STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

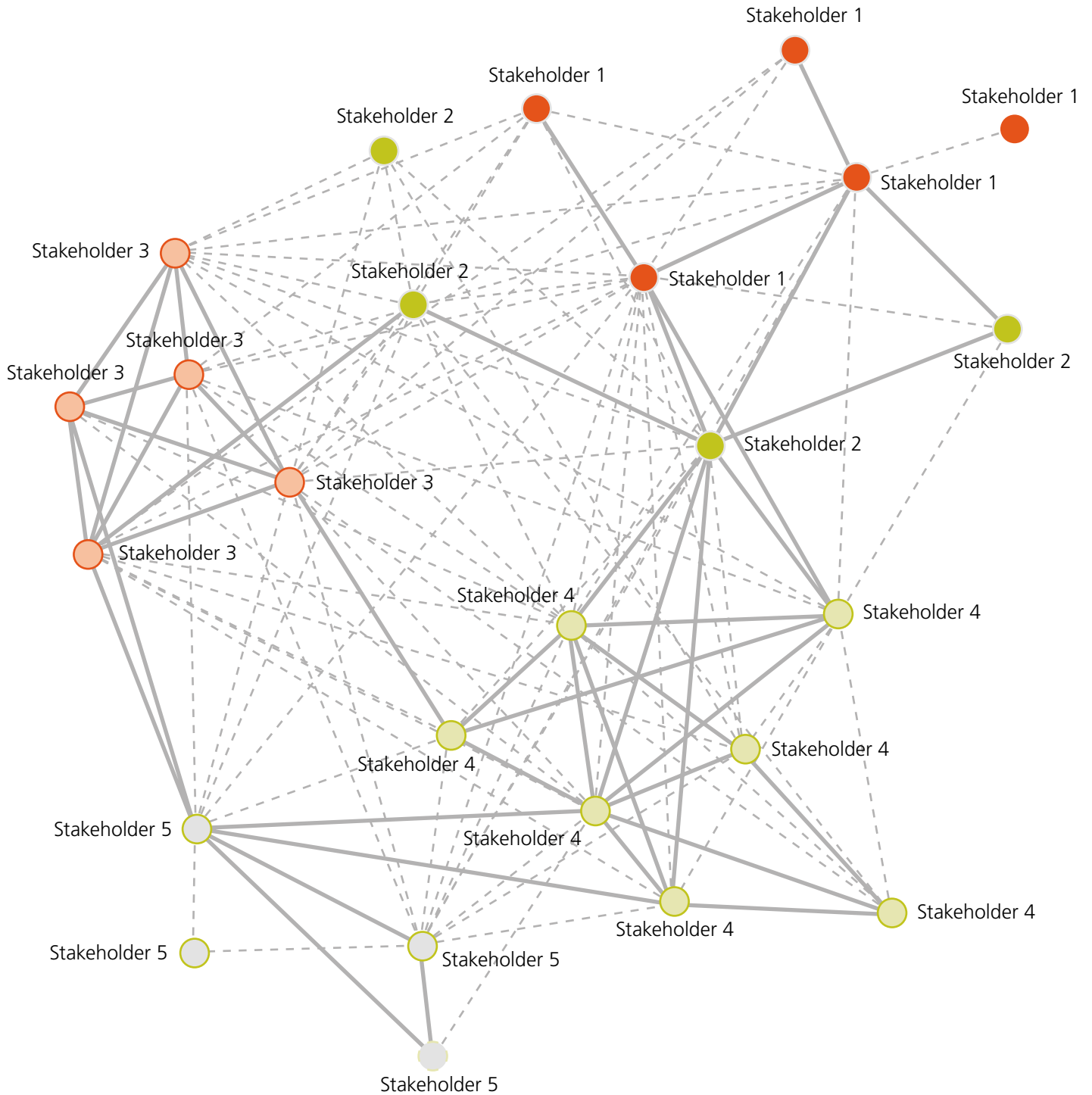


Figure 2: Visualization of the relationships between stakeholder involved in a nature conservation project.



2.3 SETTING THE FRAMEWORK

The stakeholder involved have been defined, and their relationships with each other clarified. Target groups have also been defined. The next step is to define the budget, time frame and manpower, taking into account the defined target groups. It may be necessary to use funds for external communication professionals for a solid communication strategy (this must be planned from the outset).

Communication needs resources: people who will accompany the project communicatively and develop creative communication ideas and materials, as well as time. And both require a budget that makes these communication tasks possible.

Our advice: Plan a full-time, or at least half a position over the entire project duration, for the communicative support of the measures. The larger the project is, the more work that is required. The communicator should be an expert in environmental communication, and needs to work closely with the conservation team, or it could be a conservation expert who receives in-depth training in environmental communication. In addition, we recommend that an external PR agency is entrusted with the development of a communication strategy tailored to your project. This is important at least in the initial phase of strategic development, but also when the critical phase of implementation involves public relations work or work with interest groups, e.g., landowners. Every euro invested in professional support can bring sustainable success in creating acceptance for nature conservation measures.

A further cost item that we recommend to plan for is surveys of the target groups: a few in-depth interviews with particularly important interest representatives, surveys of larger groups, or public opinion formation through events or social media – these often provide data that may not be scientifically exploitable, but is of tremendous communication effectiveness. Those involved feel heard, and it can generate solidarity for participation.

In addition, it is important to include a regular exchange with the target groups in the project and time budget: Information events, thematic seminars, and round tables, for example. Plan regular events. There is no need to allocate a huge budget for this, but there will be direct costs, i.e., for room rental and catering.

One last budget tip: Communication via social media is not free of charge. There are no printing costs, but small video clips, images, animation technology for games, and short surveys, as well as optimized distribution of information on Facebook and other platforms, all cost money (and are time-consuming).

Plan more than 10% of your project budget for communication measures and the corresponding personnel! 15–20% depending on the complication of the situation is recommended.



Instruction:

- Involve a professional (environmental) communications expert in your core team from the start of the project, and possibly also an external PR agency to develop a customized communication strategy. Plan the appropriate budget for this.
- Plan enough time and budget for accompanying measures, such as surveys and modern communication/presentation techniques, as well as paid dissemination campaigns in traditional as well as social media.



2.4 UNDERSTANDING TARGET GROUPS AND MAKING CONTACT

All stakeholders are people who base their lives and decisions on social psychological factors. They are motivated by emotional and monetary factors and needs, and they may create resistance, they belong to groups to which you feel committed and act loyally, or they may want to belong to another group or be “closer” to a role model. There are many “human” factors that lead to acceptance or conflict, and it is important to know them about the respective stakeholder, in order to win them over to support the conservation project.

For this purpose, it is important and inevitable to get to know your target groups and individuals on a personal level. Seeing and recognizing their needs and intrinsic motivations are the basis for mutual trust and communication on equal terms.



When you get in touch with the target groups, you send out messages via your appearance and your choice of language, just like the people you are talking to (see: “4-Ears Model” in the appendix). Become familiar with “non-violent communication”, as well as open and closed question techniques (see appendix). Before contact, reflect on your own attitude towards the target groups and individuals, and try to enter the conversation as openly and curiously as possible. Any potential resistance or even aversion to the other person will be a hindrance to the conversation and will lead to you not getting the answers that you need.



Instructions:

- Clarify for yourself which target groups and individuals you want to get to know on which level, and what details about socio-economic factors, attitudes, and motivation you would like to exchange with them.
- Design questionnaires and interview questions specifically for these target groups and individuals and pay special attention to open and closed questions to guide the exchange (see appendix for example questionnaire). Avoid half-heartedly reusing existing questionnaires. Your target group or individuals will immediately notice how serious you are.
- Before the exchange, reflect on your attitudes and expectations, and try to reduce possible inner resistance and prejudices in order to enter the encounter openly and curiously.



2.5 WRITING NARRATIVE

In the communication surrounding nature conservation projects, it is of great importance to create a high level of transparency for the stakeholders and the public. In order for the stakeholder and the public to find coherent answers to define their attitude to the project, they must be able to understand the complete story about a nature conservation project and, above all, to relate it to themselves.

A helpful way to clarify the complete narrative around a nature conservation project is the so-called DAPSIWR-Framework³ (based on the DPSIR-Indicator⁴). DAPSIWR comes from the English language and describes the interactions within an ecosystem in a model-like way, by defining different parameters: Driving forces (D = Driver), loads/activities (A = Activity), pressure (P = Pressure), state (S = State), impact (I = Impact), welfare (W = Welfare) and reactions/measures (R = Responses). More information on the DAPSIWR framework can be found in the appendix.

An example (Figure 3): The current agrarian structural change (driving force) has caused the drainage and intensive use of arable land (activities). This has led to a lack of meadowbird friendly habitats (pressure), which leads to a massive decline of meadowbird populations (status and impacts). This also has a negative impact on humans because it greatly reduces biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems. Measures that are currently often implemented to protect meadowbirds include rewetting of land areas and land purchase to provide habitats.

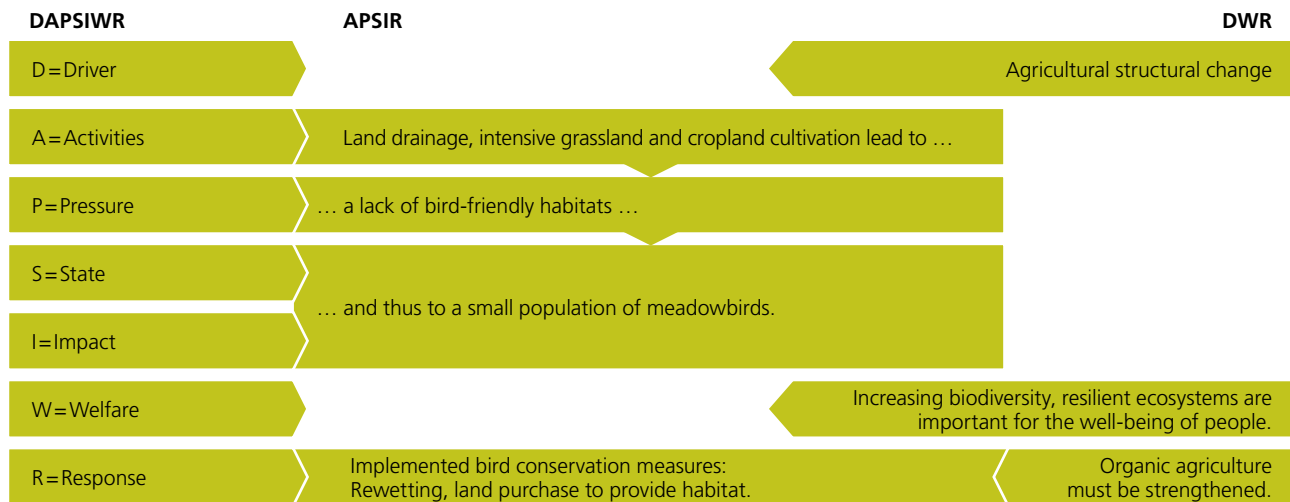


Figure 3: Explanation of the DAPSIWR framework to create transparency and completeness of a narrated story in nature conservation

Much of the communication about human-environment interaction currently focuses on activities, pressures, conditions/impacts and reactions, leaving out the deeper causes of the problem (driving forces) and the direct relationship to humans (ResponSEABLE studies). As a result, the problem is usually not tackled at its source (here: by strengthening nature-based agriculture at the political level), but measures are introduced that can lead to conflict (here: economic losses of farmers, and the feeling of being the “culprits in the situation”).

It is particularly important to consider the aspect of “well-being” when writing and telling the story. We humans are a part of nature and are constantly in contact with our environment. Thus, nature conservation always contributes to the well-being of mankind, even if it is not always obvious to the recipients. Not communicating the aspect of “well-being” usually leads to the recipients of the story not being able to relate the project to themselves. This can trigger negative emotions such as powerlessness and anger, or the feeling of their needs not being seen. Remember that most people have a fundamentally positive attitude towards nature conservation and give them a chance to understand their role in it, to feel responsible, and to remain or become capable of action.



Instructions:

- Portray your story systematically with the DAPSWIR frame. A tabular overview can be very helpful here. Clarify whether all aspects are included and plug any holes to increase the transparency of your story.
- Deal actively and intensively with the aspect of “well-being” and give the aspect plenty of room in your story. What positive influence does your project have on groups of people, humanity, and the resilience of ecosystems? What positive influence does the project have on your target groups and individuals, whose attitudes, needs, and fears you already know?
- Adapt your story to your target groups, and their attitudes and needs.



2.6 DEFINE COMMUNICATION FORMATS

You have defined communication goals and target groups for your measures, understood the needs and motivations of the target groups and written your story.

In view of the defined time frame and budget, you now need to select the appropriate communication formats that fit the respective target groups and their (communication) motivations/needs. In general, the more personal the needs and motivations of the target person are, the more important it is to communicate in small groups, or in one-on-one interviews. One example: a farmer has to implement newly decreed nature conservation measures on her land, and thus suffers economic losses. Individual discussions with the responsible people from the nature conservation authorities are more likely to lead to an agreement than an open information evening. However, an open information evening on the subject would be of great benefit to the public, residents, and those not directly affected.

Table 2 contains a selection of communication formats, typical communication goals, and target groups. The different formats are adaptable in terms of content, so that you can adapt your communication goals to many formats. For example, an exhibition can be purely informative in the way it uses language, images, and materials, or it can interactively change the behaviour of the target groups. A World Café can become a vision quest for a common project through the questions asked, or it can track down and resolve conflicts.

SELECTION OF COMMUNICATION FORMATS WITH FREQUENTLY USED COMMUNICATION TARGETS AND TARGET GROUPS.

Non-participatory formats	Communication Goals	Target Groups
Press releases	Inform (course of the project, measures, changes, etc.), create attention and acceptance	Journalists, the public (national, international)
Exhibitions/Fairs	Share an overview of the project; create attention Gain recognition and acceptance, create common values	Residents, tourists, schools
Radio	Share an overview of the project; create attention Gain recognition and acceptance, create common values	The public (national, international)
Newspapers/Magazines	Publish new information about the project (progress of the project, measures, changes, etc.); share general information	Residents (senior citizens), science, the public
Brochures, Flyers	Share a brief overview of the project (key facts)	Residents, tourists
Information boards	Display short facts and information about the project; transfer knowledge	Residents, tourists, schools

Online Media	Communication Goals	Target Groups
Websites	Inform (about the course of the project, measures, changes, etc.), convey knowledge, create attention and acceptance	The public (national, international), residents, tourists
Online Voting	Query about knowledge and opinions, obtain information	All Target Groups
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	Inform (about project progress), start campaigns (create awareness and acceptance)	The public (national, international), residents, tourists
Newsletters	Inform (about project progress), impart knowledge	The public, residents
Videos/Podcasts	Impart knowledge	The public (national, international), residents, tourists

Participatory formats – 1:1	Communication Goals	Target Groups
Surveys/Interviews	Get information	Residents, those directly affected (farmers, tenants, foresters, land owners), authorities, administration, municipalities, experts (nature conservationists)
Individual discussions ("face-to-face")	Exchange knowledge, inform, negotiate, gain acceptance, resolve conflicts	People directly affected (farmers, tenants, foresters, landowners), authorities, administration, municipalities, experts (nature conservationists)
Individual conversations (letters/e-mail)	Exchange knowledge, inform, negotiate, gain acceptance, resolve conflicts	People directly affected (farmers, tenants, foresters, landowners), authorities, administration, municipalities, experts (nature conservationists)

Participatory Formats - Group	Communication Goals	Target Groups
Round tables/ fireside chats	Exchange knowledge, inform, negotiate, gain acceptance, resolve conflicts	Residents, those directly affected (farmers, tenants, foresters, landowners), authorities, administration, municipalities, experts (conservationists), NGOs
World Café	Exchange opinions, discuss and re- flect on conflicts and issues, collect ideas	Residents, those directly affected (farmers, tenants, foresters, landowners), authorities, administration, municipalities, experts (conservationists), NGOs
Future Workshops	Exchange opinions, resolve conflicts, create common values	Residents, those directly affected (farmers, tenants, foresters, landowners), authorities, administration, municipalities, experts (conservationists), NGOs
Open Space Conference/ Conferences in general	Inform about project goals, measu- res, status, progress, and results; discuss and clarify questions	Residents, people directly affected (farmers, tenants, foresters, landowners), authorities, administration, municipalities, experts (nature conservationists), NGOs, the press
Marketplace	Present and discuss results, develop cooperation	Residents, people directly affected (farmers, tenants, foresters, landowners), authorities, administration, municipalities, experts (nature conservationists), NGOs, the press
Workshops/seminars (e.g., open house)	Impart and exchange knowledge	Residents, people directly affected (farmers, tenants, foresters, landowners), authorities, administration, communities, experts (conservationists), NGOs, tourists, schools
Excursions	Impart knowledge	Residents, authorities, administration, municipalities, experts (nature conservationists), tourists, schools
Virtual Classrooms	Impart knowledge	Residents, schools

Table 2: Selection of communication formats with frequently used communication goals and target groups.



Instructions:

- Concentrate first on a target group or person, and look at their socio-economic factors (needs, motivations, etc.), as well as their networks, groups, and contacts. Then decide in which format these factors and your story can best be expressed.
- Step by step, decide on the best possible formats for the selected target groups.
- Balance your choice of communication formats with your budget and available time frame; you may have to compromise.



2.7 EVALUATE AND MEASURE SUCCESS

Evaluating and measuring communication success is complex. When is a communication strategy successful? How can you measure whether someone has changed their behaviour or their attitude because of your communication?

It is important to think about the measurability of a communication goal from the very beginning, to define what “success” looks like, and to develop methods to evaluate the process.

Example: Meadowbird conservation projects are about creating and maintaining meadowbird friendly habitats. In terms of communication, this means encouraging farmers to mow their land later in the year, and also to reduce their grazing densities. These measures have disadvantages for farmers, as the hay is of higher quality if it is mowed earlier, and they need more land to graze their animals. Before and after analyses of changes in meadowbird populations and breeding success are of great importance to show farmers (and other stakeholders) that the measures are working.

We recommend planning the timing of the success analyses from the beginning and having the methods and manpower ready for implementation when the time comes.

But feedback loops are also important in communication with individuals, and the time it takes is worth it. Feedback loops are not only appreciated, but also strongly support staying in touch - also regarding potential future projects.

Methods for evaluating and measuring success:

- Before-and-after surveys or interviews
- Quantitative changes of animal populations, pollutants in the environment, etc.



Instruction:

- Define the short-term and long-term successes within your communication strategy, qualitatively and quantitatively, and determine at what point they should be measurable or evaluable.
- Choose qualitative and quantitative methods to measure success and set times for evaluation/measurement. Plan enough personnel at these times to carry out these evaluations.
- After evaluation, look at the results of your evaluation/success measurements in relation to the use of personnel, time, and budget, in order to assess the cost-benefit ratio of your communication strategy.

3. SUMMARY: THE CONSTRUCTION TOOLS AT A GLANCE

COMMUNICATORS HAVE KEY ROLES IN NATURE CONSERVATION.

Their style of communication, with which they convey their content and respond to the needs and motivations of their counterparts, often determines whether conservation measures are implemented or not. Figure 4 gives an overview of the building blocks necessary for a successful communication strategy.

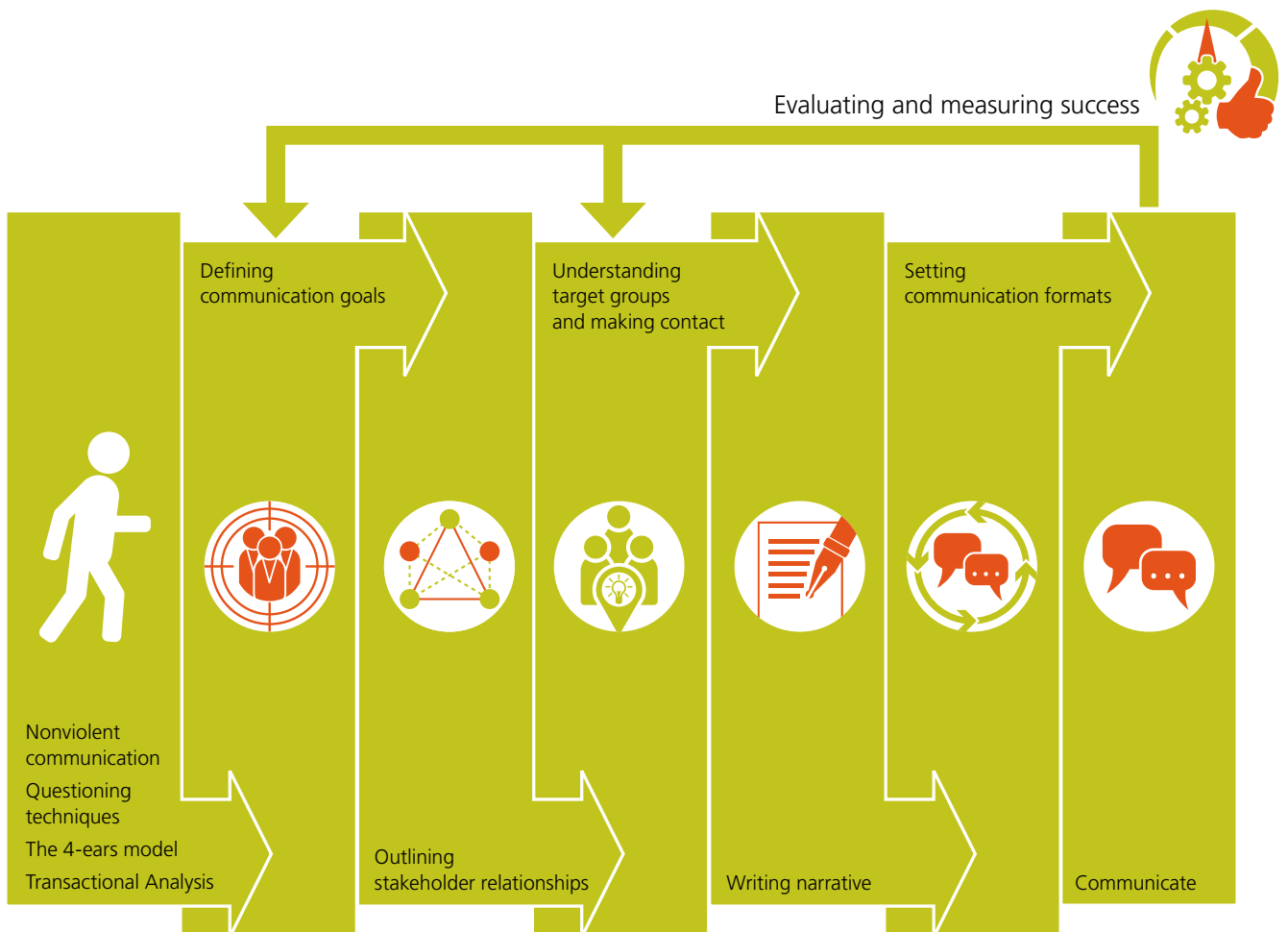


Figure 4: Overview of the building blocks for a successful communication strategy.

APPENDIXES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

APPENDIX A: COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES AND PSYCHOLOGY

A.1 COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Questions guide discussions. With the help of the right questioning technique, thought processes, motivations and discussions can be stimulated, knowledge gaps closed, or decisions forced.

There are open and closed questions:

- Closed questions: Classic questions that can be answered with yes or no. They are used for knowledge retrieval and to narrow down topics.
- Open questions: Use of Wh- questions that cannot be answered with yes or no. They generate willingness to talk and serve to collect information.

who?
what?
where?
how?
when?
why?



Application:

There are different question types that can be asked as open or closed questions:

- **Introductory question:** This question creates the basis for a successful conversation. It should be formulated openly and positively. This way, no topic of conversation is forced upon the responder, and the conversation is manageable for the person asking the question.
- **Hypothetical question:** This technique is suitable as a starting point for situations where solutions to specific problems need to be found. The question creates a situation that does not exist in reality and creates space to deviate from habitual thought patterns. **Example:** "How would you implement the project, if you had unlimited time for it?"
- **Circular question:** This type of question creates a change of perspective, in order to gain a new view of the situation. **Example:** "What would XY say to this?"
- **Rhetorical question:** This question does not require an answer (sham question) but is a hidden invitation to agree with the opinion of the questioner. It can be both provocative and harmonizing.
- **Paradoxical question:** This question reverses the actual question, in order to make prospective problems visible. **Example:** "How can we in any event manage to finish the project on time?"
- **Future question:** This question asks for concrete actions and results. **Example:** "Who does what?"
- **Solution question:** This question works to make tangible results visible. It is an effective way to end circular discussions. **Example:** "What are the proposed solutions?"

A.2 THE 4-EARS MODEL

According to Friedrich Schulz von Thun's 4-ears model (also known as the communication square, the four-sided model or the message square), it is assumed that one message contains four meanings at the same time. This means that not only utterances contain four messages, but that they can also be understood on four levels. The model can help to question one's own communications, or to resolve conflicts.



Application:

Every message that is conveyed can be meant and/or understood in 4 different ways by the sender and/or receiver:

- **Subject level:** On the subject level, pure data and facts are communicated.
Example: The traffic light is green.
- **Self-revelation:** Every message also reveals something of the sender's personality, be it emotions, views, values, or needs.
Example: I am in a great hurry.
- **Relation:** On the relationship level, it becomes clear how the two interlocutors relate to each other.
Example: I am superior to you.
- **Appeal:** This level clarifies what the sender wants from the receiver. The sender tries to exert influence on the receiver with the message.
Example: Drive off now!

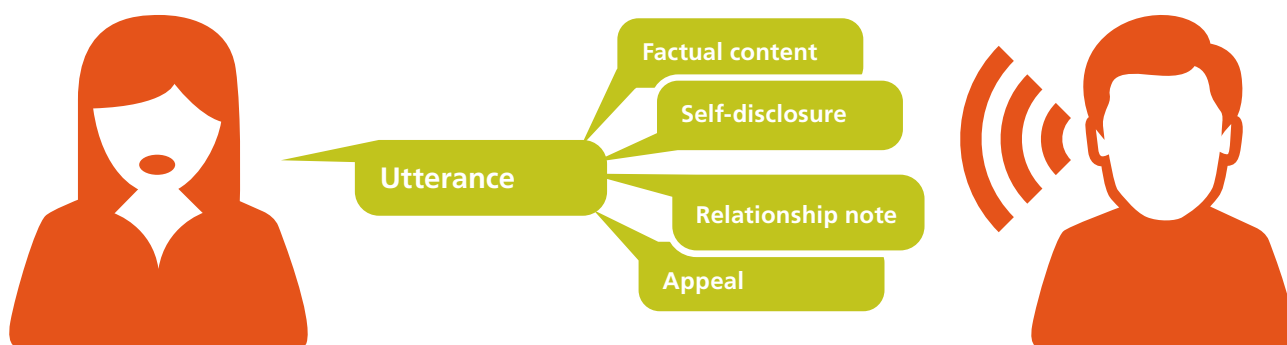


Figure 5: 4-ears model; left: transmitter with 4 messages; right: receiver with 4 ears. Both, transmitter, and receiver, are responsible for the quality of communication.

Based on this insight, Schulz von Thun has represented the four sides of a statement as a square. There is the sender with "four beaks" from which the utterances originate, and the receiver with the "four ears". Both sender and receiver are responsible for the quality of communication. However, numerous misunderstandings can occur, since only the subject level of the receiver and sender is identical in each case. Misunderstandings can arise, especially if the sender and receiver rate the four sides differently, or if the different sides are filled with different information by the participants.

A. 3 NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Non-violent communication (abbreviated NVC) according to Marshall B. Rosenberg is an attitude of appreciative and empathetic communication. It is also a method for the constructive mediation of conflicts. NVC is based on the assumption that interpersonal conflicts are caused by the fact that respective needs are communicated incorrectly in dialogues, because of judgmental and condemning language. In the NVC (discussion), content is conveyed to the recipient in such a way that empathy is recognizable, and the recipient feels understood. In conflict management, the CSF always aims to put one's own needs in the foreground, and not to point out the misconduct of the other party.



Application:

The NVC model is based on 4 components:

- **1. Observation:** Objective description of a certain action that is observed, and that affects well-being. Avoid blame, as this directly triggers justifications from the other party, and the conflict is pre-programmed. The path to efficient communication is blocked.
- **2. Expressing feelings:** Sharing of emotions that are triggered by an action. In the second step, one's own feelings are brought to the fore, so that the current state of mind is represented, without focusing on the other person. This works best with ego messages, such as "We had an appointment today, but you were not there. I was disappointed because I was really looking forward to meeting you."
- **3. Formulate needs:** Presenting the needs behind the feelings. In this step, the needs you have in connection with a concern are presented. This means that you tell your counterpart what you want or need to achieve certain goals, or to eliminate a conflict.
- **4. Asking:** Requesting a concrete action. Failure to fulfil the request is also okay. Asking is always allowed, as long as the tone of voice is right, and gives the other person the opportunity to do something positive for the other person.

A. 4 BASICS OF TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a concept in psychology that explains the structure of the human personality. TA states that actions and feelings are based on different ego states, that have been shaped by the roles that people and their counterparts have taken on in different stages of life. The different ego states play decisive roles in communication and can cause or resolve conflicts.

An ego state is the combination of thinking, feeling and behaviour. There are 3 ego states described which people take up fundamentally or situationally:

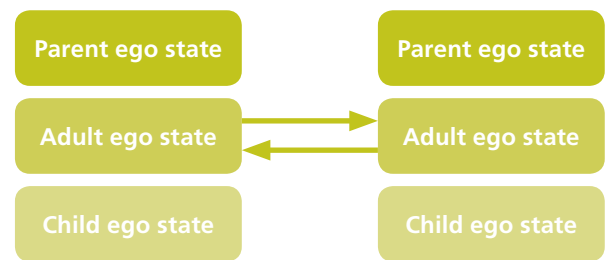
- **Parent ego state:** When you have adopted your way of thinking, feelings, and behaviour from others.
- **Adult ego state:** When you behave logically and appropriately and react to the here and now.
- **Child ego state:** When you reactivate stored experiences from earlier childhood days.



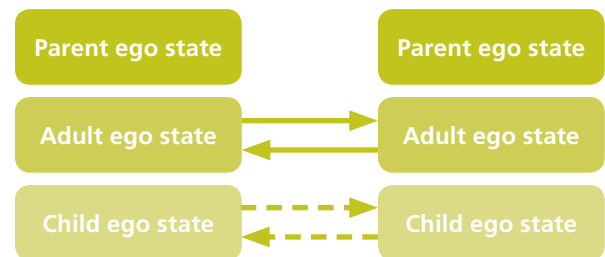
Figure 6:
The structural model of transactional analysis

In TA, the exchange of a message is called a transaction. Depending on the ego-states of the communicators, different transactions can arise (Figure 7).

With a complementary transaction, 2 people meet in the adult ego. The exchange of information is most likely established in person and between peers/equals, without hierarchy.



In a Non-Complementary Transaction, Person A is in the adult ego and tries to address the adult ego of Person B. Person B, however, is in the child ego and reacts defiantly or submissively (depending on the childhood experience of person B).



In a covert transaction, what is said does not correspond to what is meant. The conversation can escalate into a conflict ("drama triangle"), in which the parties involved take over changing roles; "pursuer", "rescuer", and "victim".

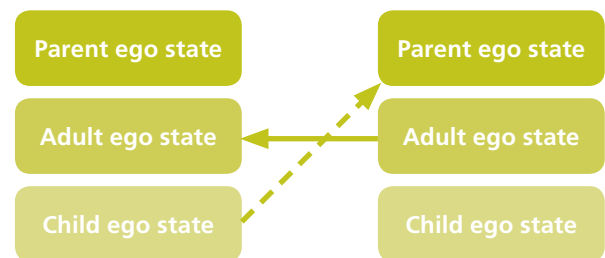


Figure 7: Models of
A: Complementary transaction,
B: Non-complementary transaction,
C: Covert transaction.

A. 5 DAPSIWR FRAME

The DAPSIWR framework is a further development of DPSIR indicator 4 by the Horizon2020 project ResponSEable (<https://www.responseable.eu/>; <http://webdoc.responseable.eu>).

The DPSIR indicator was developed by the European Environment Agency as a communication tool to describe and monitor interrelationships and dynamics in complex environmental systems in a simplified way⁴. The main target group is policy makers.

DPSIR stands for:

- D = Driving forces
- P = Pressure on the environment caused by D
- S = State of the environment caused by D and P
- I = Impact of changed environmental conditions
- R = (Social) responses to the environmental changes

In the DAPSIWR framework, two further manipulated variables are integrated:

- A = (social) activities
- W = (human) welfare

In the DAPSIWR framework, D describes social, demographic, economic, cultural, and ecological developments in society, such as population growth. These bring about changes in lifestyle and consumer behaviour, and create a demand to be satisfied by A, such as increasing the production of goods and commodities. However, A has an impact, because it changes P: the activities usually increase the pressure on the environment. This leads to changes in the environment (S), which in turn can affect the same or other components of the system through I. Ultimately, all these dynamics have an impact on W, human well-being. In order to secure W, or to maintain it with a high quality, society reacts with R. R and can influence all components (Figure 9).

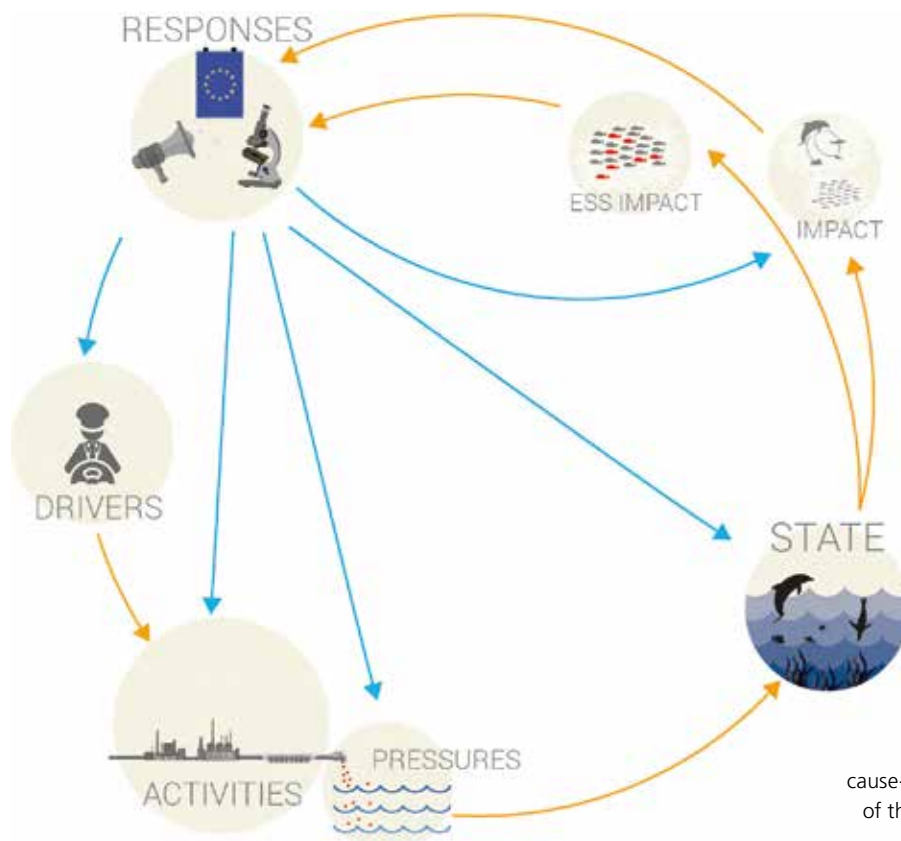


Figure 9:
Visualization of the cause-and-effect relationships of the DAPSIWR framework.

APPENDIX B: COMMUNICATION FORMATS

B.1 MODERATED ROUND TABLES

Round tables are a method of bringing together all relevant stakeholders in a project and discussing the previously defined issues through moderation. The group size should not exceed 12 participants. The method enables all participants to have equal participation. The scope for design (content and time structure) is made clear in advance, so that the process is not disturbed. The moderation is done by an external person. A discussion and result protocol is created.

This method can be used for gathering information, or in conflict situations where a balance or consensus is to be found between the parties involved.

Group size: max 12 participants

Strengths	Weaknesses
Flexible use (topic, scope, etc.)	Does not necessarily lead to a result
Regulation or settlement of conflicts	Success depends on the participation of all affected stakeholders
Binding results through participation of all relevant groups	



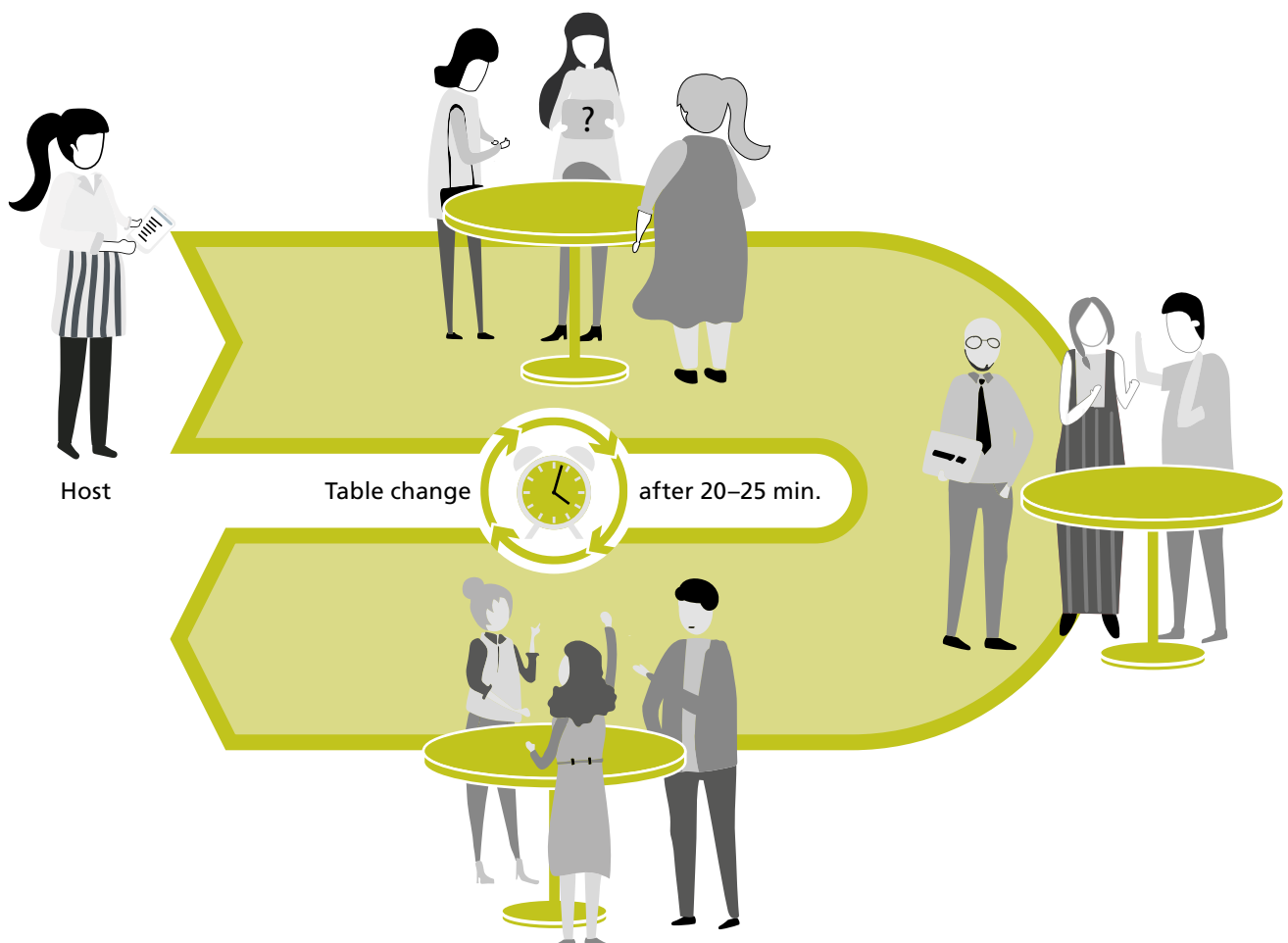
B.2 WORLD CAFÉ

At a World Café, questions that build on each other are discussed in alternating small groups. With this method, 12 to 1000 people can participate. These are initially divided into groups of 4-6 participants in different discussion groups (at coffee tables). Then a discussion round (20-30 min) is held on a defined question. Afterwards, all but one person (the host) is reassigned to the tables and all discuss a second question (20-30 min) based on the first one. There can be any number of changes of tables and questions being discussed. Afterwards, the results are collected and reflected in the plenary.

A World Café creates a relaxed, coffee-house-like atmosphere, in which a creative process is set in motion, and the collective wisdom of the group is fostered. The method is particularly well suited for developing ideas, gathering, and sharing knowledge, and stimulating innovative thinking. The informal and intensive discussions can improve the relationships between the participants.

Group size: 12 to 1000 participants

Strengths	Weaknesses
Informal and inclusive	Requires a clear and relevant question
Inexpensive and easy to organize	Not suitable for direct decision making
Promotes creativity and innovation	



B.3 FUTURE WORKSHOP

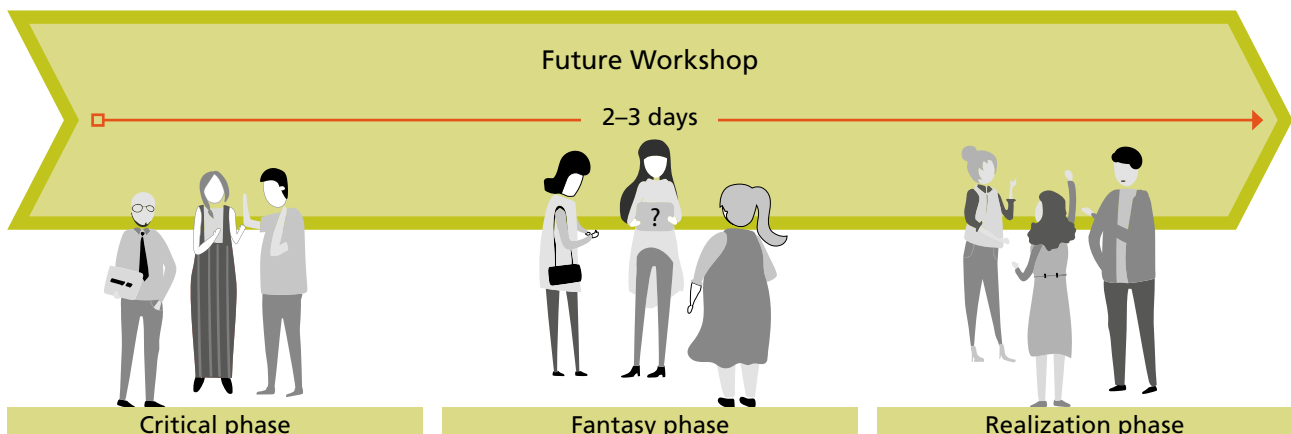
A Future Workshop is a group process that is moderated by three phases that build on each other and have different contents. The method encourages the participants to develop imaginative and unconventional solutions to their questions. The group size should not exceed 25 participants. The classic phases are:

- Critical phase: Analysis of the current situation and recording of the problems.
- Fantasy phase: Development of ideas and approaches to solutions, which may initially be utopian, and constraints are ignored.
- Realization phase: Structuring of the proposals, examination of their feasibility, agreements on further procedures.

Within these phases, different methods such as individual work, group work or plenary sessions can be used to develop and record the ideas.

Group size: max. 25 participants

Strengths	Weaknesses
Structured process with successive phases, time structures and role clarity	Ignorance of real power and domination
Openness of results	Low commitment to achieve results
Participative formulation of goals, topics, and questions	Agreement on common denominators without precise consideration of the relevance and scope of the results achieved
Inclusion of all competences, interests, wishes	Overestimation of the results, due to insufficient consideration of personnel possibilities and willingness to act, as well as structural conditions



B.4 OPEN SPACE CONFERENCE

An Open Space Conference is characterized by the fact that there is a main theme, but no fixed speakers or prepared working groups. The participants come together to decide on the main topics and the course of the conference within the main topic itself. The method is particularly suitable for gaining ideas and suggestions from the participants, exploring interests, and promoting exchange. An Open Space Conference can last 1 to 3 days and can be held in small (6-10 participants) to large (> 60 participants) groups. The Open Space Conference enables the participants to act in a self-determined and organized way. This leads to an exchange of knowledge and interests. The participants, who were merely listeners before, become creators. The resulting suggestions and ideas can come from previously underperceived perspectives and are therefore well suited to triggering change processes.

The conference is divided into five phases:

- Presentation of the main topic and the rules
- Collection of discussion topics and formation of groups
- Discussion in the groups
- Presentation in the plenary
- Conclusion/postprocessing

The Open Space Conference is based on one law and four principles:

“The law of two feet”

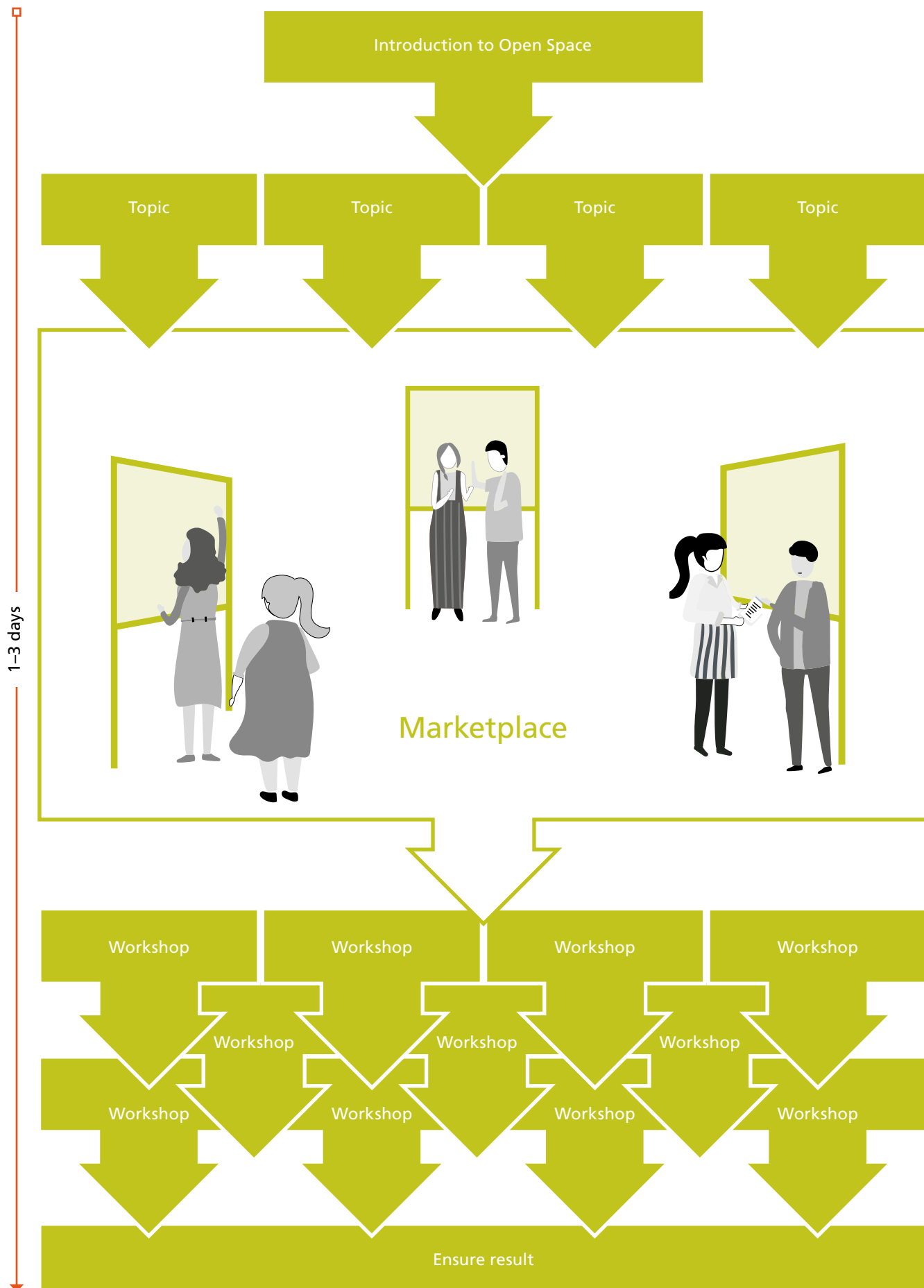
Everyone stays in a working group only as long as he/she contributes and/or can learn something. It is not only allowed but even desirable to change the working group.

Four principles:

- 1. Whoever comes is just the right person.**
It does not matter how many people are present. Everyone is important and motivated.
- 2. Whatever may happen: it is the only thing that can happen.**
The unplanned and the unexpected are often creative and useful.
- 3. Whenever it starts, it is the right time.**
Most important is the energy (not being on time).
- 4. Over is over.**
If no more energy is left, the session is over.

Group size: 6 to 1000 participants

Strengths	Weaknesses
Short lead time and low organizational effort	Course and results are not predictable
Participants can contribute according to their interests	Not applicable for participants who expect clear questions and quick results
Offers a lot of freedom for the development of creative ideas	Can be frustrating for participants if they make offers that are not accepted by the others.
Participants can work in a self-determined and organized way	The topic of the Open Space does not strike the “nerve” of the participants.
Community-building effect	If participation is forced, there is a risk that the working groups will not work constructively.

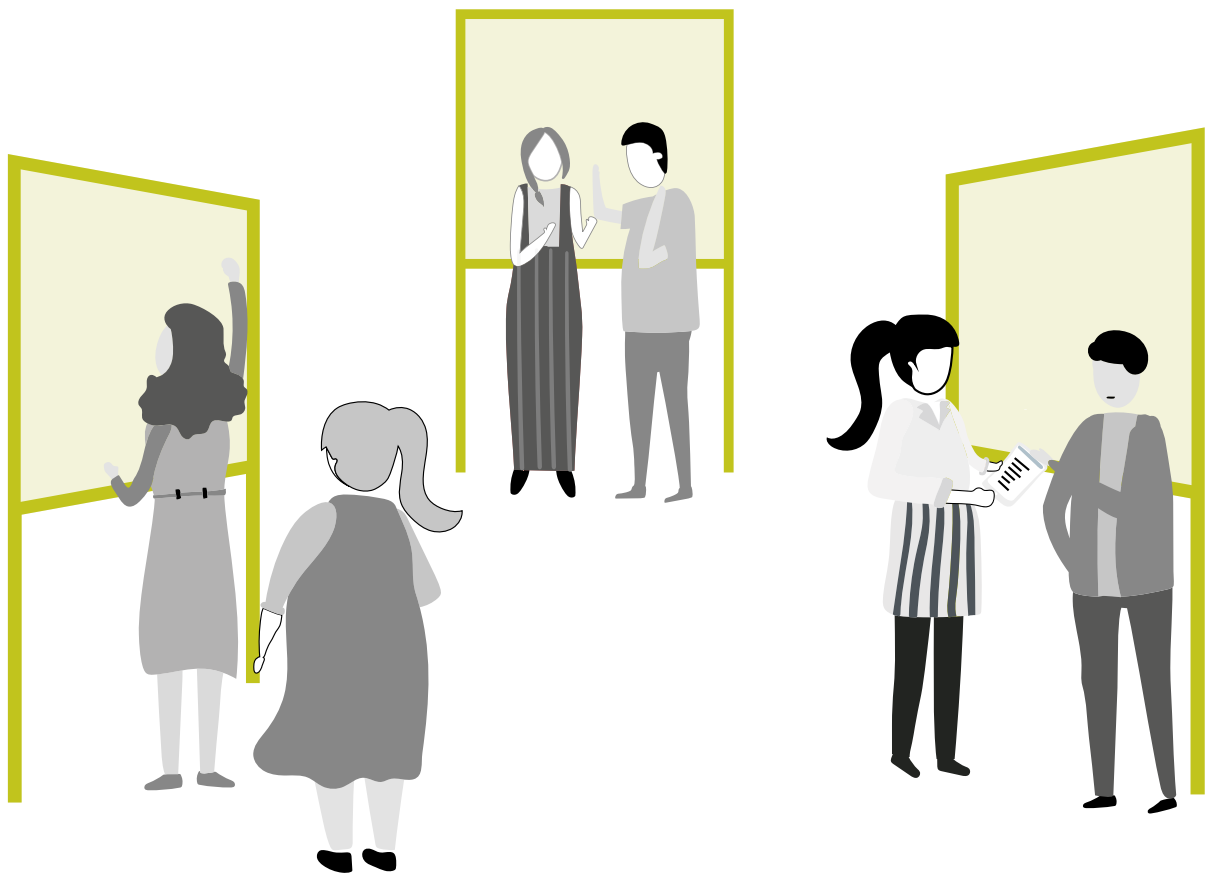


B.5 MARKETPLACE

With this method, representatives of different organizations come together for 2–8 hours and enter into dialogue with the representatives of other organizations. The structure is similar to a market with information booths or contact points for the different organizations (often with posters/visual material). The contents of the dialogues are usually the exchange of information and negotiation of cooperation projects. The representatives spend time at their own stands and also at the stands of others, so that a very interest-focused exchange can take place. As a side effect, the representatives learn to “sell” their theories or ideas in a short time or defend them from critics.

Group size: 50 to 1000 participants

Strengths	Weaknesses
Promotion of new cooperation	Some topics/projects have too little time for adequate discussion
Increases the level of awareness of certain topics/projects	Not suitable for immediate decision making
Freedom of design	



REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES

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2. Brendle, U. Kommunikation und Naturschutz. Überlegungen zur Akzeptanzsteigerung des Naturschutzes. in Natur zwischen Wandel und Veränderung (eds. Erdmann, K. & Schell, C.) (Springer, 2002).
3. ResponSEAble, H. P. Classification of knowledge on the key stories – Guidelines. (2016).
4. Smeets, E. & Weterings, R. Environmental indicators: typology and overview. Technical Report no. 25 (1999).

FURTHER INFORMATION ON COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Question techniques

- <https://www.careeraddict.com/top-5-effective-questioning-techniques>
-

4-ear model

- <https://casework.eu/lesson/the-art-of-misunderstanding-the-4-sides/>
-

Nonviolent communication

- <https://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/>
 - <https://www.cnvc.org/>
-

Transaction Analysis

- <http://www.ericberne.com/transactional-analysis/>
-

DAPSWIR-frame

FURTHER INFORMATION ON COMMUNICATION METHODS

Round Tables

- <https://participedia.net/method/5309>
-

World Café

- <http://www.theworldcafe.com/>
-

Future workshop

- <https://participedia.net/method/4796>
-

Open Space Conference

- <https://openspaceworld.org/wp2/>
-

Marketplace

- <https://www.social-marketplace-international.org/marketplace-method/>
-

ILLUSTRATIONS

The illustrations of the figures were created with resources from Freepic.com.

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR "UNDERSTANDING TARGET GROUPS AND MAKING CONTACT"



Dear Sir or Madam,

The protection of meadowbirds on the mainland and on the East Frisian islands is one of the major challenges for nature conservation in Lower Saxony. In addition to massive habitat losses on the mainland, free-roaming and feral domestic cats as well as other predators are increasingly seen as a potential threat to native birdlife.

In order to openly address these and other conservation challenges on Langeoog and to find joint solutions, the "Meadowbirds" project, which is funded by the European Union, brings all the island's stakeholders around one table. This promotes exchange between the groups and strengthens citizen participation.

On behalf of the participants of the round table, we would like to use this questionnaire to try to find out something about the number of domestic cats on Langeoog and their behaviour. The aim is to compile reliable figures for the representatives of the interest groups in this way and to support an objective discussion.

The survey is of course anonymous and does not allow any conclusions about the sender. We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to answer the following questions.

Questionnaire about cats on Langeoog

1. Do you have a cat?

 Yes

If Yes, how many (name the number):

 No

(continue with question 8)

2. Are they males or females? Are they neutered?

Number of males: thereof neutered:

Number of females: thereof neutered:

3. Does your cat carry a chip (externally not visible identification) or a tattoo (externally visible)?

Number of males: chipped: externally marked:

Number of females: chipped: externally marked:

4. How much time does your cat spend outside on average (estimate)?

0 hours (always in house/apartment) 9-16 hours a day

Less than 4 hours a day More than 16 hours a day

4-8 hours a day Unknown

Baltic Environmental Forum Deutschland e.V. // Osterstraße 58 // 20259 Hamburg
Vereinsregister Hamburg 17944 // Tel. (040) 5330 7075 // E-Mail info@bef-de.org



5. Do you know how far your cat moves away from your house on average (estimate)?

- Less than 50 meters (always near the house)
 More than 200 meters
 50-200 meters
 Unknown

6. Has your cat ever brought prey?

(please mark with a cross where applicable)

	regularly	occasionally	rarely	never	unknown
Small animal (e.g. mouse)					
Oscine birds (also young birds)					
Larger birds (e.g. pigeon)					
Others, please name: _____					

7. Are you aware that domestic cats must be neutered and marked?

- Yes, I am aware of that
 No, I did not know that

8. Would you be willing to have your cats neutered and chipped (marked) by a veterinarian?

- Yes, voluntary and at your own expense (about 120 € per animal).
 No, absolutely not, because (give reason):

 Yes, voluntary, if I get a subsidy (50% of the cost).
 Undecided

 Only if I don't have to pay anything.
 No answer

9. Age (please underline)

18-29 30-49 50-69 70 and older

10. Gender: m / f

Your comments:

Please return the questionnaire using the enclosed envelope. We will pay the postage.

Thank you for your cooperation!

